



# Amesbury

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## Memorandum

To: Council President Matthew Einson  
From: William Scott  
RE: Fields Study  
Date: **April 8, 2019 – Updated with Schedule**

## Introduction

This memorandum is in anticipation of the April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 City Council meeting. This memo is meant to respond to questions raised at the Finance Committee meeting and to coordinate the issues across multiple funding requests. Much of what is contained herein was part of the discussion at the Finance Committee; this is a follow-up to solidify that discussion.

At a prior City Council meeting on this matter, in November 2018, the analysis and program were presented by the consultant. Due to the fact that that was the first instance of a detailed analysis across all the facilities and leagues, we provided a more methodical approach as prior information was not readily available. The fields' project has reached the conclusion of the inventory stage. This inventory includes both the facilities and the programs using those facilities. A primary advantage of a more methodical approach has been the coordination of this project with leagues and other projects.

Now that the inventory step has been completed, we are moving toward working with the leagues to establish the conclusion to the planning process and a capital plan that will be the foundation for the pending investment requests that are in front of the City Council. Between the initial analysis and the completion of the master plan, leading to the capital plan, the Mayor requested the consultant create multiple draft scenarios to establish a range of possible budgets. While the initial funding discussion has been \$1.0-million from the Amesbury Heights DIF, it became clear in running scenarios that additional funds would be required to approach the needs outlined in the initial analysis; therefore, the \$1.5-million is requested to augment the Amesbury Heights funds. The important aspect of this project is the funding limits represent a budget to which the capital plan will be designed. This creates an environment where priorities must be set for the investment. This also allows the City to properly budget for the project, regardless of the capital plan outcome.

## Leverage

The Mayor's approach to any project is to leverage other resources. This means we seek methods to use the investments of others to make the City investments reach a higher outcome. Our programs such as TIF and DIF have demonstrated results, where the City's investment has returned higher returns.

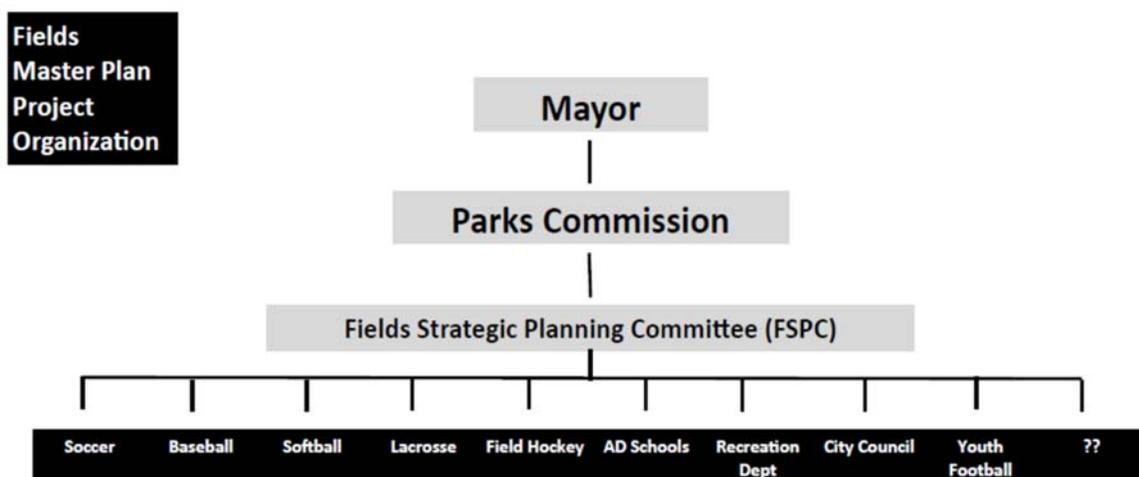
This opportunity for leverage is prevalent with the investments made by league organizations. Each year volunteers donate their time, dollars, and professional capacity to provide successful programming for the City's youth. In many cases, these leagues work within constrained budgets as their costs to the participants are far less than private sector alternatives. The challenges are greater when leagues use private sector venues to compensate for poor City facilities, thereby straining their operational budgets and limiting their program capacity even further.

In light of the context described above, the City views the league fees and volunteers as the operational side of the program which must be supported by facilities. Without adequate facilities the ability to engage more participants becomes problematic. Poor facilities then begin to drive participants to either private sector venues, or other communities. A foundation of better facilities would enable the leagues to keep pace with their users and keep residents playing in their own community.

The leverage becomes clear when one begins to understand a scenario without the leagues. In the absence of the leagues the public would demand sports programs and the City would eventually have to hire coaches, managers, and facility maintenance staff to replace the league programs which the taxpayers do not currently fund. In addition to the operational side, the City would still have to address the capital expansion now proposed. Providing better facilities supports the success of leagues and reduces the possible impacts associated with the City providing services.

## Facilities and the Fields Strategic Planning Committee (FSPC)

There are several steps that are necessary to move from the inventory to a capital plan recommendation. At this stage we have enough information to begin the discussion on the allocation of organizations and the impacts on the assets. Rather than focus on minor improvements, (benches and backstops) we will be proceeding with a bigger picture of field allocation and expansion, to address the needs and coordination of assets. There are examples of usage by teams that are on fields not appropriate for their sport, such as teams playing in outfields, on fields that may be less optimum for the standards of their sport, or facilities that need improvement, such as grading and drainage. The next step will be an exercise to allocate use across



the assets, then to recommend improvements to accommodate that allocation, including new facilities where necessary. That step is already in process as the Parks Commission is meeting with the Fields Strategic Planning Committee on Monday April 8<sup>th</sup>. The Parks Commission has appointed the committee. The above chart and below objectives were presented to the City Council in November of 2018.

- Fields Project Committee Structure**
- The Parks Commission shall appoint a subcommittee titled the Fields Strategic Planning Committee. The FSPC shall be comprised of one representative from the above organizations.
  - The organizations will select the representatives for the FSPC and may provide alternate representatives based on availability and membership changes in the root organization.
  - Members of the FSPC shall report back to their organizations,
  - The FSPC shall report to the Parks Commission, the Parks Commission shall report to the Mayor.
  - Members of the Parks Commission can also be on the FSPC.
  - All meetings which contain a quorum shall require public notification.
  - The Director of OCED is considered as staff to the FSPC and this project.
  - The Parks Commission may assign tasks to the FSPC.

- Fields Project Committee Actions**
- The City staff and consultants shall meet with the FSPC to review progress and request review and recommendations on deliverables.
  - The FSPC shall; provide a recommendation to the Parks Commission where actions are requested such as adoption of plans, request for funding, or recommendations for actions.
  - The Parks Commission shall review the recommendation and vote to accept as is, accept with amendments, or reject in whole or part and return.
  - The Parks Commission shall report to and provide recommendations to the Mayor for approval of plans and programs as maybe developed by the analysis.
  - Each members of the FSPC is considered as having the authority to speak and act for their organization, with the understanding that time will be afforded for review.

The next part of the plan will be a field capital plan identifying the improvements necessary to support that approach. After that deliverable is created, the next step will be to refine the capital plan to definitive cost estimates and propose projects for the funding now proposed to the City Council. This approach allows leagues to be more involved in matching their needs to the invested outcome. Setting a budget through the Council actions will create the investment target to set finite priorities for the organizations. Through this process we have learned that the City is very fortunate to have dedicated volunteers that manage, sustain, and expand recreational sports opportunities. Not everything can be solved by tax dollars, partnering with these organizations can extend the City’s capacity to provide services, providing they have the facilities to support those services.

**Funding Current Proposal**

The pending funding sources represent borrowing under two separate programs. The \$1.5-million is a typical borrowing, resulting from payments through the General Fund. The \$1.0 million will be programmed through the DIF program. The DIF program does not constitute debt because it has a definitive revenue stream. A note: the DIF report filed on April 1<sup>st</sup> requires amendment as the adjacent numbers reflect a corrected approach. The spreadsheet for the DIF numbers used a monthly payment approach, these numbers are more in keeping with the City annual payment. The most likely scenario for the borrowing will be in two stages: The first borrowing would be for the design and permitting costs which would be \$300,000. The second borrowing would be for the balance of the funds subject to a construction bid, or \$2,200,000. Using this approach, the City Council could condition the borrowing for the \$1.5-million to allow only \$300,000 borrowing until the Athletic Fields capital plan is submitted to the Council for review.

<b>Athletic Fields Funding</b>			
Years	DIF Funding	General Fund	Total
	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 2,500,000.00
1	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
2	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
3	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
4	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
5	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
6	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
7	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
8	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
9	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
10	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
11	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
12	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
13	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
14	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
15	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
16	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
17	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
18	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
19	\$ 70,361.08	\$ 105,541.62	\$ 175,902.69
20	\$ 67,981.72	\$ 101,972.58	\$ 175,902.69
	<b>\$ 1,404,842.18</b>	<b>\$ 2,107,263.26</b>	<b>\$ 3,518,053.84</b>

## Other Funds

The City Council questioned the possibility of several other opportunities for funding. Funds from leagues may be part of this project, as the plans and coordination develop with the project. Typically, when a project is a partnership with non-profits the construction is separated into two phases. The first phase being the main facilities, fields, irrigation, drainage; and the second phase being the amenities, benches, backstops, and other facilities. The City funds would build the base facilities and we would work with the leagues on how the facilities can be augmented to meet their needs. Separating the funds allows any issues of contract management to be separate, thus reducing liability issues of volunteers on an active construction site.

The second source of revenue, that has not been mentioned, is the proceeds from the property known as Margaret Rice Park (see attached Order). The City Council voted, as per the attached Order, to have those proceeds go to the soccer fields' project, with certain conditions. The circumstances have changed from that original order, and, as a result, the Order should be reviewed for applicability and amended where necessary. The Margaret Rice land will be scheduled for sale within one year, and the City is holding its sale to coincide with the progress of the Atlantic Center, in order to derive a higher value gained from proximity to the facility. As a result, these funds will not be readily available, however we intend to plan additional phases in the fields' capital program to determine opportunities for future investments, one of which could be these funds.

## Coordination with Other Projects

The school project necessitates the movement of two baseball fields to maintain the current status. The needs assessment indicates that two ballfields are necessary, above and beyond the relocated fields, for a total of four. Both consulting teams, fields and schools, have been in communication to avoid conflicts or redundancy in planning each project. The difficulty of the project is the timing. The baseball fields design should begin before the school vote to make sure the fields are available before the school construction. The two ballfields to be constructed through this project are planned as replacements for the school project. The important nature of the analysis is the comparison between needs, in the form of actual programming, and assets in the inventory. The field study as a separate document, with the resulting needs analysis, should not be lost in the relationships between other projects.

## Project Sequence

The fields' capital project requires several steps to achieve approval. The first step is the design process which begins on Monday April 8<sup>th</sup>, with a meeting of the Parks Commission and the Fields Strategic Planning Committee. Over a period of about two months, the groups will complete the Fields Master Plan and capital plan, then begin the balance of the public process and permitting. The capital plan will represent the projects that will be funded by the request described in this report. After the creation of the plan, the project sequence would follow the table below. The timeline will be developed in consultation with the Mayor, consultant, and Parks Commission.

Jurisdiction	Purpose
Parks Commission and Fields Committee	Complete Master Plan and concept capital plan for funding.
City Council	Review plan with Council to demonstrate investments.
School Committee	Review where applicable for School assets.
Public Meeting	Hosted by the Parks Commission, an open workshop before beginning permitting.
Conservation Commission	Wetlands protection act as applicable.
Planning Board	Site Plan as applicable.

## **Conclusion**

This project is one of those few opportunities where an investment by the City can be managed by its residents, in service to its residents. Community facilities are often managed by City departments to provide services. In this circumstance, the facilities are clearly an open government approach to enhance the quality of life in the community through volunteers. The ability to leverage the good nature of residents to provide services to themselves is the best form of capital investment.

The creation of expanded facilities must be matched with the establishment of clear and effective management agreements, between the leagues and the City, to make sure the approach is successful. As the plans near conclusion, the next step will be to solidify the management of the facilities, to properly engage the resources of the leagues to allow them to provide quality services.



## CITY OF AMESBURY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND SIXTEEN

### **SPONSORED BY: C.KENNETH GRAY, MAYOR BILL No 2016-086**

At the meeting of the of the Amesbury City Council held on September 13, 2016 in the City Hall Auditorium the following action was taken:

#### **A Resolution Relative to the Use of Proceeds Generated from the Potential Disposition of Margaret Rice Park.**

Summary: Subject to the completion of necessary legal and other authorizations, the City will consider the use of the proceeds from the potential sale of the property commonly known as Margaret Rice Park (Assessors Map 98 parcel 18 with 3.71 acres, and Map 98 parcel 17 with 1.89 acres, and Map 97 parcel 11 with 31.90 acres, hereafter referred to as the PROPERTY) for the purpose of of constructing athletic fields. The majority of such allocation shall be dedicated to the Woodsom Farm soccer fields as determined by a future capital allocation plan proposed by the Mayor in consultation with the City Council and other relevant public bodies within the City.

WHEREAS, the City Council voted through Order number 2001 - 51, in March of 2001, to surplus the PROPERTY for the purpose of siting recreational fields at the PROPERTY ; and

WHEREAS, the PROPERTY in its current condition is not well suited for the development of athletic fields; and

WHEREAS, the PROPERTY located near I-495 is better suited for economic development to grow the commercial/industrial tax base; and

WHEREAS, any potential sale of the PROPERTY will generate revenue, hereinafter referred to as the PROCEEDS; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor, in an effort to honor the City Council vote of Order 2001-51, recommends that such PROCEEDS be used for the development of athletic fields; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Amesbury Soccer Association (ASA) have entered into a lease agreement, hereinafter referred to as the LEASE, for the development of soccer fields by the ASA at Woodsom Farm, hereinafter referred to as the PROJECT; and,

WHEREAS, the ASA has demonstrated extraordinary, concrete commitment to the development and management of the PROJECT in the best interest of Amesbury; and,

WHEREAS, the PROCEEDS shall be dedicated to the PROJECT in a manner determined by a future capital allocation plan as may be proposed by the Mayor; and,

WHEREAS, such a capital allocation plan shall be subject to a specific budget, all applicable statutes and regulations, any amendments to the LEASE, and any subsequent action by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, no portion of the PROCEEDS shall be used for any engineering or administrative purposes or costs whatsoever; and

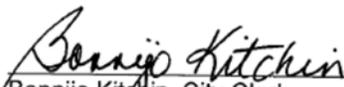
WHEREAS, the PROCEEDS shall be allocated and managed through and by the City; and,

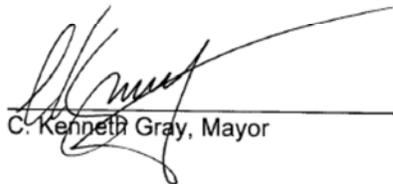
WHEREAS, this resolution is subject to approval of the Order filed in September 2016 entitled An Order to Transfer the Care, Custody, and Control of Margaret Rice Park from the Tax Title Custodian to the Mayor for General Municipal Purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it Resolved by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the City Council does hereby support the recommendation of the Mayor and further supports the establishment of a future capital allocation plan that provides for the allocation of the PROCEEDS for the purposes of construction and development of the PROJECT.

Councilor McClure moved to approve 2016-086 as written. Councilor McMilleon seconded. Voted 6-Yes, 2-Abstain, Lavoie, Sherwood (8 members present)

Witness my hand and seal for the City of Amesbury this 27<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2016

  
Bonnijo Kitchen, City Clerk

 10/2/2016  
C. Kenneth Gray, Mayor